

International Student Orientation **Assessment Summary Report**

Anna McCreedy
October 9th, 2017

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Executive Summary	2
First-Year Orientation	4
Transfer Orientation	7
EAP Orientation	10
Graduate Orientation	13
Future Recommendations	16

Executive Summary

In line with its strategic plan, the Berkeley International Office (BIO) is committed to enhancing the quality and efficiency of our products and services. Through the assessment of the International Student Orientation (ISO), BIO aims to identify areas for improvement and maximize on program strengths. This assessment report looks at the helpfulness of the individual orientations sessions, evaluates Student Learning Outcomes, and identifies both areas of value and improvement.

This data will be used by BIO in the planning of future orientations to increase their relevance to and engagement of incoming Cal students.

Limitations

Incorrect data: Some survey respondents confused the ISO with the campus-wide Golden Bear Orientation (GBO). All answers that obviously referenced GBO were ignored when analyzing data.

Measure used to collect data: The assessment survey was distributed through emails to the students that registered for ISO. Therefore, the survey would not be accessed by participants that did not check their berkeley.edu email address, or who did not register for ISO but chose to attend.

Demographic of Respondents

Response Rate: A total of 1186 students attended the orientations (423 first-year, 188 transfer, 269 transfer, and 306 graduate), and a total of 492 survey responses for an overall response rate of 41.5%. The individual population response rates are as follows:

- First-year: 28.1%
- Transfer: 43.6%
- EAP/transfer: 34.6%
- Graduate: 63.4%

Gender: Male: 53.0% , Female: 45.3%

Home country: The largest number of students reported China as their home country (35%), followed by India (10%), and South Korea (5%). A total of 59 home countries were Reported.

Student type: Out of 386 respondents, 32.6% attended the EAP/transfer orientation (17.5% EAP, 15.1% transfer), 22.7% attended the first-year orientation, and 36.5% attended graduate orientation. The remaining 8.3% did not attend any international student orientation.

Absence at Orientation

Most common reason for absence:

- UCB commitments (MEng bootcamp, department orientation, classes): 69.6%
- Not enough time: 17.4%

Other reasons for absence include: family commitments, not yet in country, and no knowledge of the orientation.

First-Year Orientation

First-year orientation schedule:

8 AM: Breakfast and check in

8:30 AM: Welcome

8:35 AM: Who is BIO & Overview

8:45 AM: You've Done it Before, Can You Do it at Cal?

9:15 AM: Cal in Context: Navigating Academics

10 AM: Team Builders

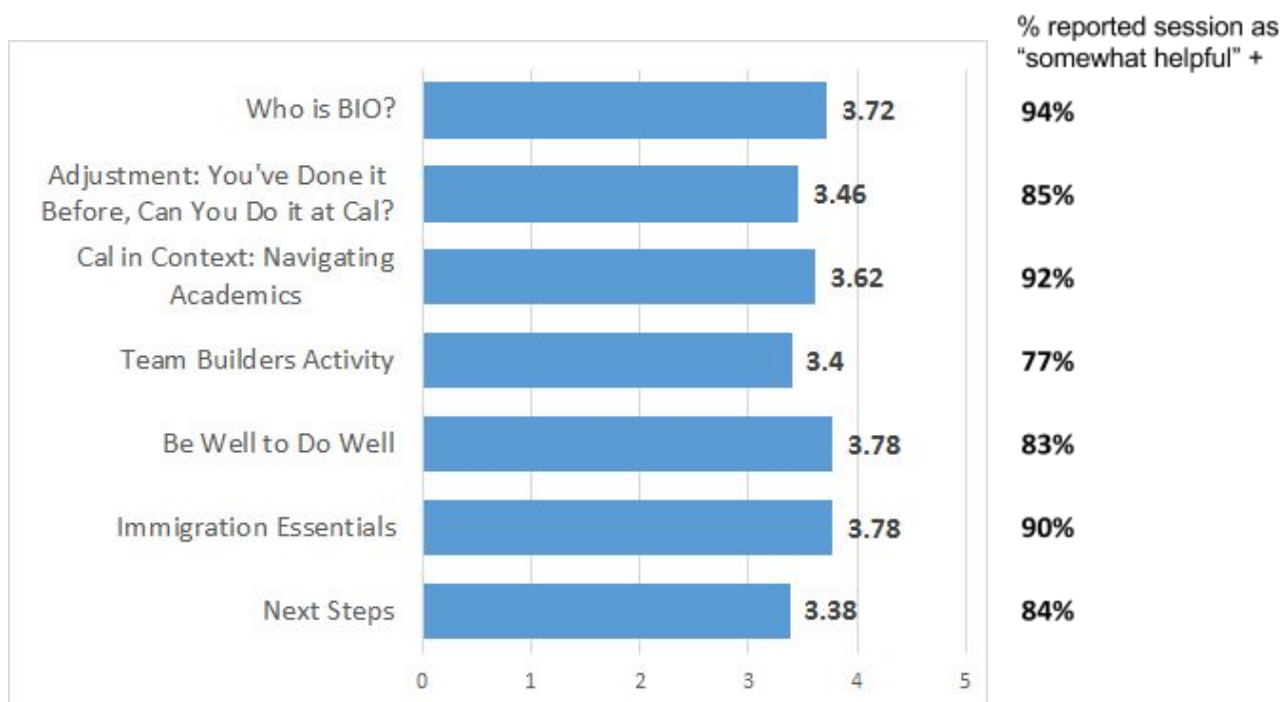
11 AM: Be Well to Do Well

11:30 AM: Immigration Essentials

11:50 AM: Next Steps

Session Helpfulness

Participants were asked to rank each orientation session based on how helpful they were in preparing them for their journey at Cal. In this ranking, 1 = not at all helpful, 2 = not very helpful, 3 = somewhat helpful, 4 = very helpful, and 5 = extremely helpful.



The majority of comments on each session were positive. Some notable comments included:

- The information provided was clear and thorough.
- Students were already familiar with the information in the What is BIO session, as it was the same as the online prep materials
- The Team Builders Activity had inexperienced leaders, and was too short

- Speakers were entertaining and engaging, especially many student leaders in the team builders activity and Dr. Yi in the adjustment session.
- The Next Steps session was too rushed, and students were too hungry/tired

Areas of Value

First-year students placed the highest value on the socialization activities and opportunities (29.3%), though at a smaller percentage than transfer/EAP students. Other areas they highly valued were wellness (17.3%) and cultural adjustment (17.3%).

When asked what helpful tips and resources first-year students would make use of in the future, they most commonly reported wellness (32.8%), specifically the Tang Center and counseling. General UCB information was also popular (31%).

Areas for Improvement

There were some areas that first-year students wanted to see more focus on in future orientations. Specifically, 27.3% of them wanted to see more information on cultural adjustment, including how to integrate into Cal culture, and how to approach the bottom of the cultural adjustment U-curve.

They also were asked about specific suggestions for next year's orientation. First-year students focused on more socialization activities/opportunities, as well including more information on cultural adjustment.

Learning Outcomes Assessment

First-year students were asked to rank how strongly they agreed with statements assessing the following learning outcomes:

- Found the handouts and materials provided in the orientation folder to be useful
- Now feel more prepared and ready for Golden Bear Orientation
- Now feel more prepared for how to handle the cultural adjustment I may experience during my time at Cal
- Met at least 1 other student whom I plan to contact after orientation
- Feel a sense of community with my fellow international students
- Understand immigration regulations that I will need to follow as an international student at Cal
- Understand and value how using resources leads to greater academic success
- Better understand how to navigate the academic and administrative aspects of my education at Cal
- Understand how and when to access resources to support my mental and physical health
- Understand the value of the CBT Thought Record and plan to use it in the future

The majority of students (89%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had reached all learning outcomes, with the highest ranking on the assessment of understanding “how and when to access resources to support my mental and physical health.”

The largest outlier was that 25% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with having understood “the value of the CBT Thought Record and plan to use it in the future.” Another large amount of first-year students (26.3%) did not feel “a sense of community with my fellow international students.”

Unanswered Questions

First-year students had very few unanswered questions. The questions they did have mostly addressed safety as well as practical matters, such as banking and phones.

Takeaway: First-year students also placed value in social opportunities, but also greatly emphasized cultural adjustment and overall wellness. They wanted to see more information on integration and preparation for life at Cal.

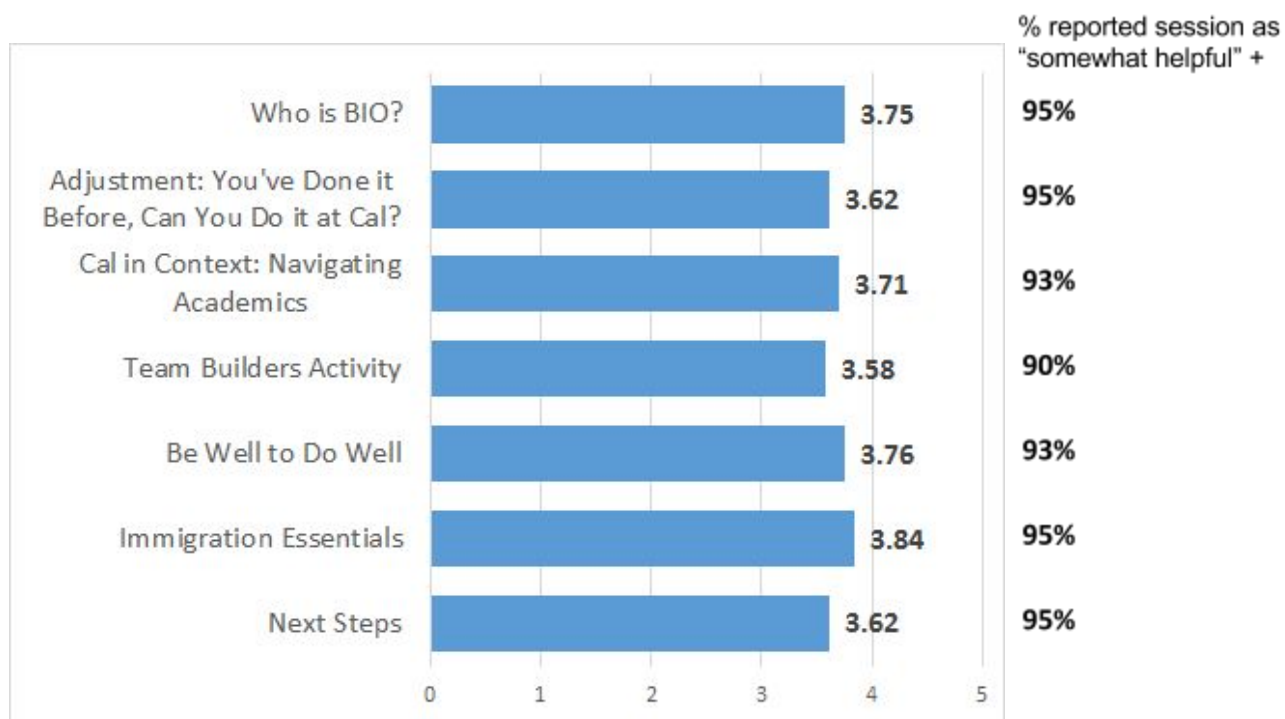
Transfer Orientation

Transfer orientation schedule:

- 1 PM: Check in & Travel Signatures
- 1:30 PM: Welcome
- 1:35 PM: Who is BIO & Overview
- 1:45 PM: You've Done it Before, Can You Do it at Cal?
- 2:10 PM: Cal in Context: Navigating Academics
- 3 PM: Team Builders
- 4 PM: Be Well to Do Well
- 4:30 PM: Immigration Essentials
- 4:50 PM: Next Steps

Session Helpfulness

Participants were asked to rank each orientation session based on how helpful they were in preparing them for their journey at Cal. In this ranking, 1 = not at all helpful, 2 = not very helpful, 3 = somewhat helpful, 4 = very helpful, and 5 = extremely helpful.



The majority of comments on each session were positive. Some notable comments included:

- The adjustment session was reassuring, and helped to look towards the future and set goals

- The Navigating Academics session very helpful and engaging, but would like more focus and additional information
- A lack of active participation in the Team Builders Activity, and lack of training in activity leaders
- The Immigration Essentials session important to see, and was both impressive and easy to understand.
- Better time management and less rush during the Next Steps session

Areas of Value

Out of all aspects of the orientation, transfer students placed the highest value by far on the socialization activities and opportunities (30.9%). Other areas of note included wellness (10.9%) and cultural adjustment (7.3%).

When asked what helpful tips and resources transfer students would make use of in the future, they most commonly reported General UCB information and resources (36.4%). Among these, students focused on the Tang Center (30%) and the Career Center (25%).

Other useful tips and resources included academic information (21.8%), such as the SLC, study groups, and academic advising, as well as wellness information (21.8%) about counseling and the CBT thought record.

Areas for Improvement

Of the students that identified topics for greater focus, 26.7% of students would like to see more information on academics, and 20% would like more on employment. Other topics included immigration (13.3%) and extracurriculars/campus involvement (13.3%).

For suggestions for future orientations, the largest amount of suggestions had to do with the structure and organization of the orientation, including better time management and more breaks. The next most common suggestion was to have more social activities.

Learning Outcomes Assessment

Transfer students were asked to rank how strongly they agreed with statements assessing the [orientation learning outcomes](#).

The majority of students agreed or strongly agreed that they had reached all learning outcomes (88.77%). The largest outlier was that 24.6% of transfer students disagreed or strongly disagreed with having “met at least 1 other student whom I plan to contact after orientation.”

Unanswered Questions

The majority of transfer students did not have unanswered questions (79.2%). Out of those who did, most were concerned with academic areas, including enrolling, choosing their major, and meeting with their advisor.

There were a number of students that did not understand the value of the CBT Thought Record, and who did not feel adequately prepared for Golden Bear Orientation.

Takeaway: Transfer students highly valued opportunities for social engagement. Their satisfaction with current social opportunities was low, and they would have liked to have more activities and opportunities for socializing in future orientations. Beyond this, transfer students also placed a high emphasis on academics, and had many unanswered questions regarding this topic.

EAP Orientation

EAP orientation schedule:

1 PM: Check in & Travel Signatures

1:30 PM: Welcome

1:35 PM: Who is BIO & Overview

1:45 PM: You've Done it Before, Can You Do it at Cal?

2:10 PM: Cal in Context: Navigating Academics

3 PM: Team Builders

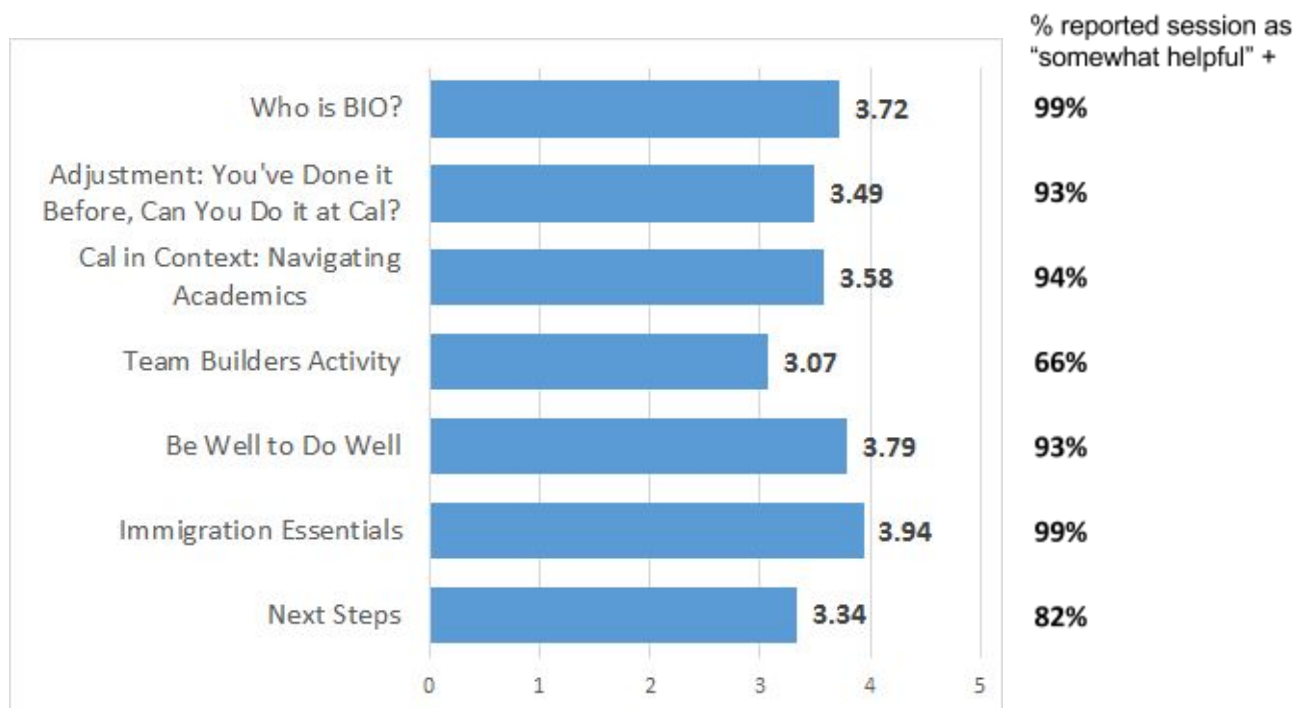
4 PM: Be Well to Do Well

4:30 PM: Immigration Essentials

4:50 PM: Next Steps

Session Helpfulness

Participants were asked to rank each orientation session based on how helpful they were in preparing them for their journey at Cal. In this ranking, 1 = not at all helpful, 2 = not very helpful, 3 = somewhat helpful, 4 = very helpful, and 5 = extremely helpful.



The majority of comments on each session were positive. Some notable comments included:

- Who is BIO session helped to see the larger picture, and served as an introduction to important resources--however, other students were already familiar with the information in the What is BIO session, as there was overlap with the online prep materials

- Student was left with a lack of understanding about the internal organization of UCB
- The Navigating Academics session had a lot of useful information, but had too much to understand all at once
- The Team Builders Activity was too short
- More complicated topics (immigration and academics) could have handouts with the information, to make it easier to remember later

Areas of Value

Similar to transfer students, EAP students placed the highest value by far on the socialization activities and opportunities (41.7%). Other areas they valued were cultural adjustment (16.7%) and immigration (13.3%).

When asked what helpful tips and resources EAP students would make use of in the future, they most commonly reported wellness (32.8%), with specific resources including the Tang Center, counseling services, and alternative thoughts.

Other useful tips and resources included BIO information (16.4%), and immigration information (16.4%).

Areas for Improvement

Of the students that identified topics for greater focus, 77.8% of them wanted to see more information on academics.

For suggestions for future orientations, many EAP students similarly reported that more academic information should be included, such as course enrollment and study tools.

Learning Outcomes Assessment

EAP students were asked to rank how strongly they agreed with statements assessing the [orientation learning outcomes](#).

The majority of students (87.39%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had reached all learning outcomes, with the highest ranking on the assessment of understanding “immigration regulations that I will need to follow as an international student at Cal.”

The largest outlier was that 26.2% of transfer students disagreed or strongly disagreed understanding “the value of the CBT Thought Record and plan to use it in the future.” There were also a number of students who did not “feel a sense of community with my fellow international students.”

Unanswered Questions

The majority of EAP students did not have unanswered questions (85%), but out of those who did, most were concerned with academic areas, including exam structure and work balance.

Takeaway: EAP students placed a great deal of value on social opportunities and cultural adjustment, and indicated that they did not feel community with their peers. They also identified academic topics as an area for improvement and greater focus.

Graduate Orientation

Graduate orientation schedule:

8 AM: Breakfast and check in

8:30 AM: Welcome & Introductions

8:45 AM: Navigating Campus

9:15 AM: Academic Success Panel

10 AM: Break

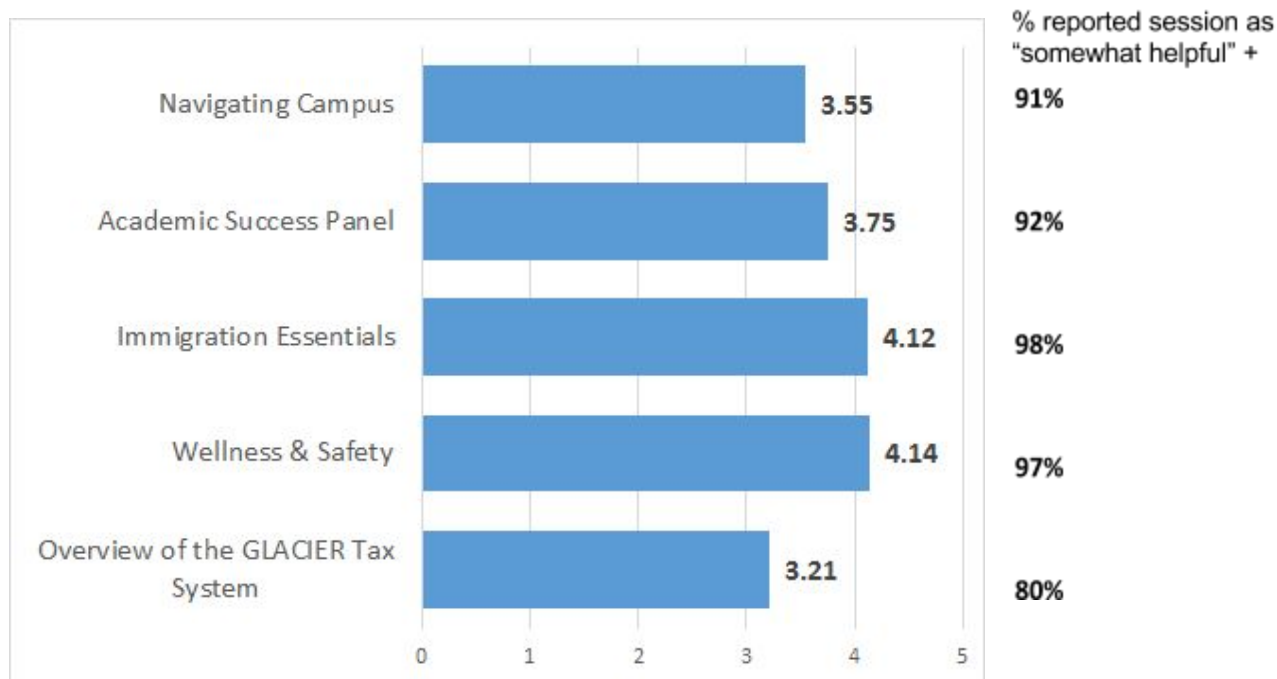
10:30 AM: Immigration Essentials

11 AM: Wellness & Safety

11:45 AM: Overview of the GLACIER Tax System

Session Helpfulness

Participants were asked to rank each orientation session based on how helpful they were in preparing them for their journey at Cal. In this ranking, 1 = not at all helpful, 2 = not very helpful, 3 = somewhat helpful, 4 = very helpful, and 5 = extremely helpful.



Grad students had many suggestions for almost every session. These included:

- Overview of Glacier
 - Not enough detail/too short
 - Should have more clear deadlines
 - Information should be introduced earlier through email
- Wellness & Safety

- More information on sports facilities
- Immigration Essentials:
 - None
- Academic Success Panel
 - More variety (have Masters students in addition to PhD)
- Navigating Campus:
 - Too rushed
 - Not enough detail/helpful material
 - Should have campus tour

Areas of Value

Grad students placed the highest value both immigration information (20.5%) and the student panel (20.5%). They also highly valued safety information (18.1%).

When asked what helpful tips and resources grad students would make use of in the future, the most common response, by far, was safety information (31%). This included information on the Bear Walk, UCPD, and night safety services.

Areas for Improvement

Of the students that identified topics for greater focus, 41.7% of them wanted to see more information on the Glacier tax system. Another area of interest was student life (20%), which included extra-curricular activities, transportation, and other local Bay Area information.

For suggestions for future orientations, grad students responded on the orientation structure, especially focusing on having a more diverse student panel.

Learning Outcomes Assessment

Grad students were asked to rank how strongly they agreed with statements assessing the following learning outcomes:

- Found the handouts and materials provided in the orientation folder to be useful.
- Now feel more prepared and ready for the coming semester at Cal.
- Am more aware of the structure of UC Berkeley as a large research institute.
- Feel a sense of community with my fellow international students.
- Understand immigration regulations that I will need to follow as an international student at Cal.
- Have a better understanding of what academic success looks like at Cal and of how to balance research, coursework, teaching, and social life.
- Better understand how to navigate the academic and administrative aspects of my education at Cal.
- Understand how and when to access resources to support my mental and physical health.
- Feel more prepared to use the Glacier Tax System.

The majority of students (87.84%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had reached all learning outcomes, with the highest ranking on the assessment of understanding “immigration regulations that I will need to follow as an international student at Cal.”

The largest outlier was that 33.6% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with feeling “more prepared to use the GLACIER Tax System.” Another large amount of first-year students (19.5%) did not feel “a sense of community with my fellow international students.”

Unanswered Questions

Graduate students’ unanswered questions were largely about the GLACIER tax system.

Takeaway: Grad students placed more importance on practical topics such as campus resources, insurance, safety, and immigration information. In this orientation, the biggest area for improvement was the Glacier Tax information session, which students felt was not detailed enough.

Future Recommendations

Data-Driven Recommendations: Collected from assessment data

- **Socializing:** With the exception of graduate students, most orientation participants highly valued socialization opportunities and activities. The Team Builder activities had a relatively low “helpfulness” rating, but the comments on the activity seemed to either be very positive or firmly negative, with the largest factor being the competence of the activity leader (led by GBO volunteers). In the next orientation, it could be helpful to have more extensive training for these leaders to be sure that they are all well-prepared. In addition, there could be other supplemental socialization activities added throughout the orientation.
- **Tailoring to the population:** Each of the groups valued different different aspects of the orientation. First-years focused on cultural adjustment and socialization. EAP students/transfers highly valued academic topics as well as socialization. Lastly, graduate students were most interested in more practical, daily-life information. Each session could be adapted to provide more information on what those students find most useful.
- **Timing/Structure:** There were a few sessions (GLACIER Tax, Next Steps, etc.) that students found to be too rushed due to shortage of time. There are several approaches that could prepare for this:
 - A mock run-through of the orientation in order to plan for timing and technological set-up.
 - A designated person to track the time, and hold up signs in order let those on stage know how much time they have left.
 - Planning ahead for parts of the presentation that can be easily dropped if things are running long
- **Materials:** While students responded very positively to the information-heavy sessions such as Immigration Essentials and Navigating Academics sessions, some also commented that it was difficult to remember all of the information. It could be helpful to have supplemental handouts/materials to accompany the presentation, which students can refer to later.

Anecdotal Recommendations: Collected from personal experience and adviser suggestions

- **Multi-pronged approach:** When there are multiple orientations taking place at once (such as the first-year orientation and parent orientation), it will be helpful to have one point person for each different event so that their full attention can go to a single event.
- **Parent survey:** A parent feedback survey was handed out, but was not collected at the end of the orientation. The parents tended to give very detailed feedback, so being able to gather this information would be very helpful in the future.

- Too many cooks: While it was helpful to have almost all student advisers involved in the orientation, it also created a very busy schedule as people had to balance advising at BIO with orientation presentations at Dwinelle Hall throughout the day. While all can be involved in orientation planning, it may be easier to post a few advisors at BIO for the duration of the orientation, while the others spearhead the orientation.